

Lullaby

by Miss Peg

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Summary: When Jane and Maura are left holding a baby involved in a murder case, it makes them consider their own desires for children. But with Maura's 40th birthday just around the corner, time is running out.

1. Chapter 1

****Author Notes****:** Here I am with another one! Don't worry, I'm still working on Rewind. Inspiration hit and I felt the need to start this one. I'm hoping it'll be lighter than my usual angsty stories (no promises, because things can change) and whilst I can't promise Jane/Maura will be a thing, it is a plan that eventually that should happen. I have a busy week, so it's going to be hit and miss by way of updates - but I should be back in action properly by Friday.**

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><p>The baby wriggled in the woman's arms. She swaddled him in the blanket. The baby kicked his chubby feet and she lost a leg, tucking the blanket back over it, before he forced out of the swaddle once again. The woman wiped at her cheeks, rubbing the tears from her skin.<p>

"I know this must be difficult for you," Jane said. She leaned forwards, her elbows on her knees.

"Difficult?"

The woman stared into her eyes. Fire burned beneath the surface. Jane braced herself for the backlash to her words. She'd used the same phrase time and time again. Sometimes it worked, other times it failed miserably.

"My newborn has no father," she said. The earlier attempt to clear the tears did very little for the fresh outpouring. "He is six days

old. He doesn't even have a name. I have barely had any sleep since I had a very traumatic eighteen hour labour, and a birth that nearly resulted in my hospitalisation. Now you're telling me my husband has been murdered. You do not understand the meaning of the word difficult."

Lowering her gaze, Jane remained silent. She accepted her misplaced words, though she didn't desire the argument that would likely follow if she attempted to mend the situation. The fact of the matter was very clear.

She didn't understand. She probably never would.

The woman stood, her son still wriggling out of his blanket. She towered over her. Jane felt herself become smaller, insignificant, in the moment. Before she could glance up to the woman, she felt the heavy lump of baby land in her arms.

The door closed.

Jane lifted her head, confusion pulled her eyebrows together. The baby, in his new and unfamiliar surroundings, squawked and kicked, his lungs fought against the air surrounding them. Jane rocked him back and forth, but his lungs were strong and his worries real. She lifted him against her shoulder and rubbed his back.

"Excuse me?" she shouted, through the baby's cries, hoping his mother would be stood on the other side of the door, waiting to complete some form of punishment.

When the door stayed closed, and nobody came to relieve her of her new task, Jane felt her shoulders drop. Not only did she have the murder of a younger father to solve, she now had to do something about his son's abandonment. The Safe Haven law meant she couldn't prosecute the mother, providing she opted not to return, but putting the child in foster care was a last resort she didn't really want to consider.

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The baby's cries rang out through Boston Police Department's homicide division. Jane rocked the baby back and forth, to no avail. She switched it up and placed him on her shoulder, moving across the room. But the baby wouldn't stop.

"Korsak, do something," she said, but he just shrugged his shoulders. "Just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I'm any good at this."

"Didn't say it did," Korsak said.

"Then why won't you help me?"

"Because somebody needs to solve his father's murder and the mother handed the baby to you. I've got uniform trying to track her down."

Frankie entered the room, his nose in the air and his eyes squinting. He moved closer to Jane. "You stink."

"Here, take him," Jane said, pushing the baby into his arms. Frankie pushed him back into Jane's and she accepted him ungratefully. "I need a bathroom break."

"Korsak and I are going to speak to the father's employers."

"What do I do with the baby?" she asked, still jiggling him about.

"Smells like he needs a diaper change."

"We don't have any diapers."

Frankie shrugged his shoulders and backed out of the room, Korsak on his tail. Jane turned around, searching for someone to help but everyone was averting her gaze. She let out a groan, which only sought to upset the baby further. She carried him out of the office toward the elevator. Taking it down to the basement, she entered the lab.

"Take him," Jane said, thrusting the baby into Maura's arms and walking across the room. She shook her arms out, her muscles ached from the constant weight in her arms.

"Hello," Maura said, running a finger across the crying baby's cheek. "Jane, what is going on? Who is this baby?"

"He was left here," she said, folding her arms across her chest. "His father is the victim, his mother just handed him to me and left."

"Have you contacted the Department of Children and Families?"

"No." She sighed. The Safe Haven procedure flooded back and she pulled out her cell phone. The baby continued to scream. Maura carried him out of the lab and into her office. Jane trailed behind. "Can you do something about the screaming?"

"He needs a diaper change."

"I know." Jane rolled her eyes. "I can smell it."

"Where is his diaper bag?"

"He doesn't have one. His mom just walked away without the baby. I don't think she was really thinking about how we would look after him once she was gone."

"Okay," Maura said, carrying the baby towards the autopsy room.

"Where are you going?"

"To change his diaper."

"In the autopsy room? Are you trying to scare the kid?"

Maura raised an eyebrow. "There are no bodies in there at the moment. It's the most sterile environment, and the most suitable location to change his diaper. You call the DCF and I'll sort out our little

problem."

"Little?" Jane asked, scowling. She placed her phone against her ear.

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"Incy Wincy Spider went up the water spout, down came the rain and washing poor Incy out, out came the sun and dried up all the rain, Incy Wincy spider went up the spout again."

Jane rushed into the office with a couple of bags. She placed them down on the couch and stared at Maura. Maura turned to face her, and just stared back.

"What?" Jane asked.

"I was about to ask you the same thing."

"You were singing."

"Do you have a problem with my singing to the baby?"

"No," Jane said. "But he's not even a week old, I don't think he understands."

"Very early on babies recognise faces and gestures, even newborns have been known to imitate their parents. He's learning with everything that happens around him. Music can help to stimulate the development of his hearing."

"Great. Now he's done some of that, I got some diapers, formula, some bottles, and a cute little teddy bear," Jane said, pulling a cream coloured bear out of the bag. "I also got another outfit for him. I remember when TJ stayed with us we went through about four tops in a couple hours."

Maura picked up one of the bags. "Watch him while I make up a bottle?"

She carried the bag out of the office and down to the Medical Examiner's Office kitchenette. Filling the sink with boiling hot water from the kettle, she sterilised the equipment. In an ideal world, she'd have used something more geared towards babies, but given the limited resources it would have to be sufficient.

"Maura, he's started crying again," Jane shouted, carrying the baby into the room.

"Would you like to make the formula?" Maura asked, holding her arms out.

"Will it take long?"

"It'll be a few minutes."

"I'm okay," Jane said, cradling the baby's head with her arm and resting him up against her shoulder.

Maura scooped the sterilised bottle out of the water and started

preparing the formula. She watched as the baby cried out against Jane's shoulder, his little mouth opening and closing. Jane lowered her face to his head, and though Maura expected she didn't realise she was being watched, took in a long, deep breath. The corners of her mouth tugged. She'd done the very same thing earlier.

"Here," Maura said, testing the bottle's temperature. She handed it to Jane, and they walked back through to the office.

She sat down at her desk. The baby's father's autopsy was overdue, something that played on her mind. She didn't like to leave evidence gathering if she could help it, but his son was equally important. More so, considering he was alive. She opened up her laptop in an attempt to begin preliminary paperwork, but her eyes travelled over it to Jane and the baby.

"You need to eat it all up," Jane said, her attention focused entirely on the baby. "So that you grow up big and strong. I know it's gonna be tough growing up without your daddy, but you're gonna be alright. The DCF are going to take good care of you while your mamma's struggling. Then maybe you'll get to go home."

"You're good with him," Maura said. She closed her laptop. Work could wait. She stood up and walked around her desk. "He likes you."

"He likes the milk," Jane said, rolling her eyes. The nipple of the bottle slipped out of his mouth. He wriggled, his little legs kicking against the swaddle, grizzly noises escaping his mouth. Jane pushed the nipple back towards his tiny pink lips. "Oh dear."

"Did the DCF say when they'd be here?"

"As soon as possible," Jane said. "Could be half an hour, could be two hours."

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Two and a half hours later, a woman walked into the office with a file in hand and a soft expression on her face. She stood in the doorway and waited for Jane and Maura's attention to turn to her.

"Hi," Jane said, wiping her drool covered hands on the sides of her slacks and sticking a hand out to her. "I'm Detective Rizzoli, you must be Silver Heyes?"

"It's nice to meet you, Detective Rizzoli," Silver said, grasping her hand and giving it a shake.

"This is Doctor Isles," Jane said, holding a hand out to Maura, who carried the baby in her arms.

"I see the two of you have done a good job with the little one," Silver said. "He doesn't have a name, correct?"

"We nicknamed him Billy," Jane said.

Silver Heyes opened her file and removed a document. She handed it over to Jane. "I'm going to need you to sign this, just to confirm what we discussed on the phone, and to officially hand care over to

the DCF."

"Detective Korsak has sent uniformed officers to track down the mother," Jane said, leaning against her knee to sign the papers. "Will Billy be able to go home?"

She smiled, and sighed. "That depends on what happens next. Ideally we'd prefer he return to his mother. Under the circumstances, it might be more appropriate for him to remain in temporary foster care until she's capable of looking after him."

"Here," Jane said, handing over the document.

"He's a pleasure," Maura said, holding the baby out to Silver. Carefully settling him into her arms, she stepped back and retrieved the bag of items they'd purchased. "He seems to enjoy Incy Wincy Spider. He had a bottle of formula a few hours ago, he's due some more soon. We've been unable to identify any major issues. He's cried a lot, but I think that's understandable considering he's in a new environment with new people."

"Thank you," Silver said, looking down at the baby. "I think it's time we took you to somewhere a little less clinical."

Stepping forwards, Jane rested a hand across Billy's forehead. She lowered her lips down to his cheek. "Bye, Billy."

"Goodbye," Maura whispered, reaching out to his tiny fingers, which quickly wrapped around her thumb. She kissed him briefly on the nose and untangled her hand.

"Can we get an update?" Jane asked. "We're working on his father's case. I'd like to know that he's okay."

"I'll call you tomorrow," Silver said.

"Thank you."

She carried Billy out into the corridor. Maura and Jane moved toward the doorway and watched as she waited by the elevator. When Silver stepped through the open door, Jane held up a hand, waving goodbye, before they disappeared from sight.

"Drink?" Jane asked.

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"I've cancelled the party." Maura sat opposite Jane, circling a finger across the top of her wine glass.

Jane looked up from her beer. "What? Why?"

"I don't want a party anymore," Maura said.

"But Maura, you've talked about it for months." Jane pushed her beer to one side and leaned forward. "You only turn forty once."

"I know; I've changed my mind."

Silence fell between them. A comfortable atmosphere that only sought

to remind Maura how much she valued Jane's friendship. They could drink in silence, no words exchanged for hours, and it would feel exactly the same.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing. I'm fine."

She didn't much want to dwell on her decision, and no amount of conversation was going to change it.

"Just because you can lie now doesn't make it okay to," Jane said. Her observation brought a smile to her face. "You're not fine."

"Okay." Maura's smile faded. "I'm not fine."

"What's wrong?"

"It's nothing."

"Nothing...or something."

"Something of nothing."

"What does that even mean?"

"To make something out of nothing," Maura said. "Meaning it is not important. It has come out of nowhere and there is absolutely nothing that I can do about it. I need some time to get past it. Then I will be fine."

Jane raised an eyebrow and reached for her beer. "A very wise woman once told me that you can do anything you put your mind to."

"Unfortunately, that doesn't apply in this situation."

Maura turned her attention once more to her glass of wine. She circled the glass with her finger, ran her finger and thumb up and down the stem. Distractions brought a wonderful element of comfort.

"How about you let me be the judge of that?" Jane asked.

"Jane," Maura said, staring into her eyes. She longed to move on to another topic of conversation, yet the way Jane stared back was enough to pull it all out of her.

"Maura."

That one brief word, her name on Jane's lips, the tone of her voice. Maura's resolve slowly disappeared and she was left feeling quite naked.

"I thought I was okay," she said. "I decided after Jack moved away that I would be happy without a partner, that I was okay not having children."

"Is this because of Billy?"

"In part." Maura sipped her wine, allowing the liquid to swirl around her mouth, latching on to her taste buds before she finally swallowed. "I'm forty in two days, Jane. My body clock is reaching a critical stage. There is very little chance that I will bring a child into this world. I'm not married, I don't have a boyfriend. Unless I meet someone tomorrow and get pregnant right away, I need to accept that I will continue to live the rest of my years childless, and alone."

"You're not alone." Fingers danced across Maura's knuckles. She stared down at Jane's hand wrapped around hers and she felt the truth in her words. "You're never alone."

"I know," she said, lowering her head. "I am thankful for that each and every day."

Another silence fell between them. Maura picked up her wine glass and turned it round, watching the wine spin, creating a small vortex.

"You want a kid?" Jane asked.

She placed the glass back down on the table and waited for the liquid to calm. She raised her head, her eyes fixed on Jane's. "I do."

"Then why not have one?"

The simplicity of Jane's question made Maura laugh. Her mouth tugged at the corners, stretching up to her eyes. She could feel the creases forming, could sense the permanence of her years of enjoyment. As a scientist, she longed for the more simplistic thought process that Jane carried about certain things. She knew the science. She knew the probability of conceiving a child after forty. She was all too aware of the medical interventions she didn't know she wanted to explore.

"Jane." She paused, sighed, retrieve her hand. "As I have explained, I'm a single woman with no chance of finding someone to have a child with. Even if I met someone today, by the time we have reached an appropriate stage in our relationship to even consider children, it will be too late."

Jane shrugged. "You don't need a man."

Maura picked up her glass of wine and swallowed a mouthful. Once again Jane's simplicity hit her, only she wasn't laughing. She didn't really know what to think, or feel. The idea that she, a professional woman with an expanse of knowledge about science, couldn't even see a basic possibility.

The crease between her eyebrows deepened. "I don't?"

"You've told me yourself about the medical advances we've made," Jane said. "How single, and particularly older, women, are finding alternative ways to have children."

"You remembered that?" Maura asked, recalling the exact conversation. The possibilities for older, and single, women were something she had

read about in a medical journal. But for some reason she had yet to consider them as something possible for her.

"Of course I remembered it," Jane said. "I do listen to you."

"So, you're proposing that I visit a sperm bank and have a child alone?" Maura swallowed another mouthful of wine. She felt her hands start to shake. The very possibility of there being a practical solution to her worries made it all the more frightening. "Whilst I appreciate your consideration, raising a child is an awful lot of work. I don't think I'd want to do it alone."

"You're not alone. I'd help."

Brown eyes, so fixed on Maura's, so seriously set. The proposition laid out between them was one Maura had expected the least. She stared back, focused her attention on the very slight changes in Jane's pupils. Dilated. Her interest was not a passing phase.

Maura cleared her throat and downed the rest of her drink. "You...want to raise a child with me?"

"Sure."

The nonchalance unsettled Maura the most. She placed her hands into her lap under the table, the continuous shake of her fingers was not something she wished to share. Jane stared at her. Attempting to get her head around the concept of bringing a child into the world without a partner was challenging. Now she was faced with something completely unexpected.

Reality pulled her back into the room, her thoughts drifted to the possible results of said proposition. If she was to become a mother and have Jane's help, she couldn't be too sure how long that would be for.

"What if you meet someone and choose to have a family of your own?"

"Let's be honest, Maura. I'm no spring chicken either." Honesty lingered in her eyes. Maura valued the moments when Jane opened herself up to her vulnerabilities. The truest privilege of being Jane's friend. "My birthday's a few months away. Do you really expect me to be able to do what you haven't in a few months?"

"You do have a habit of driving men away," Maura said, regretting it instantly. Offending your friend was not the way to keep them on side.

"Thanks, Maura," Jane said, but the curve of her lips settled Maura's concerns. "We could do it together."

She sat upright, reclaimed her still trembling fingers from under the table and rested one on top of the other on the table in front of her. "You want us to become co-parents."

"Why not?" Jane shrugged, that simplicity was still there. In many ways it made perfect sense. "We practically live in each other's pockets already. Besides, Ma will not stop on at me about having more grandchildren. Who better to raise a child with than your best

friend?"

"I don't know what to say."

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><p>Author Notes****: Thanks for reading and giving this one a chance, I'm hoping it's different enough to the usual baby fics - I can't wait to hear what you all think about it, so please, if you can take a moment to leave a comment, I will be forever grateful.**

2. Chapter 2

Author Notes**: Wow. Thank you everybody. I wasn't expecting such an interest in this story, but here you all are. I almost certainly won't be updating this story every day, but I will try and get a couple of chapters up a week depending on how busy I am. I was hoping to update Rewind today, but I have a busy afternoon/evening so depending on what happens that may not be possible). I hope you enjoy reading the next chapter.**

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><p>It was Wednesday. The same as any old Wednesday. She would climb out of bed, shower, dress, and go to work. Somebody would possibly have their life extinguished by a family member, friend, or acquaintance. She would prepare their body for autopsy, gather evidence, and begin the process of finding out who that person was. If it wasn't a homicide, somebody would die by unknown causes and she would begin the painstaking process of providing answers to grieving relatives. She would go home, drink a glass of wine, read an article in the latest medical journal, and go to bed. An average day.<p>

It was also her fortieth birthday.

She lay in bed staring up at the same ceiling she'd looked at for a decade, the only difference was the shade of white had changed a couple times over the years. She purchased her current home just after her thirtieth birthday, after moving from an apartment across town. Her career had reached some stability and her hopes for the coming years were more personal. Eventually Ian would move home, or so she had wished. That ship had sailed long ago.

Further opportunities to progress her career came, and she took them. But her personal goals reached a standstill.

Until she met Jack.

"Happy Birthday, Maura," she said to herself, climbing out of bed and stepping under the shower stream. For the briefest moment she forced herself to think only of the water hitting her skin, until her thoughts pierced the steaming bubble.

Before Jack came into her life she couldn't see any viable options. She'd dated many men, some of them she took home for a night, or a few weeks, and it was fun. At some point along their time together, they didn't want to continue their brief relationship, or she scared them off with her medical diagnoses. Jack was different. He accepted

her quirks, he slipped into the empty space in her life like a hand in a custom made glove.

Then he left.

The reasoning for his departure didn't bother her. He needed to do right by his child and she couldn't begrudge him that. If anything, it reminded her how perfectly he would have suited her personal goals. Being a father came naturally to him, and he wasn't afraid to change his whole life to continue that role.

Despite her feelings running deeply for him, it wasn't him she specifically missed. It was the possibility she lost with the end of their relationship.

"Happy birthday," Jane shouted, entering the house some time later. Maura poured a second mug of coffee and placed it on the counter. Long arms stretched around her back and pulled in close. She sunk into Jane's arms. They saw each other so often that the pleasantries afforded to those who didn't live in each other's pockets were forgotten most of the time.

"Thank you," Maura said, stepping backwards. She reached for her own coffee and sipped it slowly.

"Time for presents!" Jane placed a gift bag on the counter.

"You didn't have to." She reached for it, then looked back up at Jane. "That's very kind."

She pulled tissue paper aside and lifted out a bottle of her favourite wine, a card which she stood up on the counter, and an envelope with a voucher for a balloon ride on it.

"Thank you, Jane; something I can cross off my bucket list. That's lovely."

"Did you look closely enough?" she asked, pointing at the information on the voucher.

"For two," Maura said. She raised an eyebrow at Jane.

"You can take anyone you want to, Maur," she said. "But if you wanted to take me, I did say I'd do something on your bucket list. I promise I won't moan once. Okay, maybe once. But that's it. One moan, then I have to enjoy it."

She smiled and placed the bag to one side. "That's very thoughtful, thank you."

"You've missed one."

A final card rested in the bottom of the bag. Maura lifted the flap and pulled out a small slip of paper. She closed her eyes and ran a finger across her eyelids. The words caught up in the back of her throat. "A picnic at the zoo with Bassâ€|Jane."

Jane placed her hand on Maura's wrist before she could place it back down by her side. "I know you miss him."

She nodded and attempted to close the floodgates, but her eyes stung and her throat ached. "You, you know me so well."

Jane ran her hand across Maura's arm. A silence followed that was both comfortable and laced with unanswered questions. Jane's hand still rested on Maura's wrist when she spoke again. "Did you have time to think about our conversation the other night?"

She stared down at Jane's fingers on her arm. "I haven't made a decision."

Her offer was one that Maura couldn't quite picture in her mind. She wanted to be a mother, and yet co-parenting with her best friend was not something she had ever considered. It didn't fit the picture she had of a husband and two children. A family that belonged to her in a way no other family ever really had.

"I'm sorry."

Jane shrugged. "There's no rush, well, not a lot of rush."

"Would you like some breakfast?"

"No," Jane said. "We're going out."

"We are?"

"Yes, we are. Now you've seen sense and decided not to cancel the party, we need to do something to celebrate your actual birthday."

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"How about this one?" Angela asked, holding up a floral print dress.

"No, no, and a definite no," Jane said, shaking her head.

She ran her hand across the rail. Under most circumstances she wouldn't go anywhere near a dress, particularly spending time shopping for one. But Maura's birthday was an exception. She knew Maura well enough to know that Maura wouldn't mind her turning up in her jeans and a nice shirt. She also knew Maura well enough to know that deep down she would be disappointed, and it wouldn't fit in with the concept of her celebration.

"It's pretty," Angela said.

"Correction, it was pretty," Jane said. "In the eighties."

"How about this one, then?"

Angela held up a simple moss green dress, with a long, flowing skirt. Jane tilted her head to the side to consider it. It wasn't the worst thing in the world.

"I'll try it on," she said, heading for the changing cubicles.

"About time, we've been here for hours," Angela said, following close

behind.

"Don't exaggerate, Ma. We've been here twenty minutes."

"Feels more like two hours shopping with you."

Closing the door behind her, Jane dropped her slacks, pulled off her shirt. She stepped into the dress. After zipper acrobatics, she ran her hands down the front of the material.

"Do you want to grab a burger before we go?" she asked.

"Can't, I've gotta go to work."

"Then you can make me a burger," Jane said, reaching behind to unzip. She allowed the dress to fall to the ground and changed back into her own clothes. Opening the door, she pushed the dress into her mother's arms. "That'll do."

"You could have shown me what it looked like," Angela said.

"No need," Jane said, marching towards the cashier's desk. "It's fine."

"We should buy you some shoes and a purse to match."

Jane rolled her eyes. "No. We've been here for thirty minutes too long already. I'll drive you to work and then you can feed me."

"People wouldn't think you were a full grown adult," Angela said, placing the dress on the counter and pulling out her card. "If it wasn't for Maura, I'd be worried about leaving you."

"Why, where you going?"

"Nowhere. But I won't be here forever. You leave it any longer and I won't have any more grandchildren."

Jane glared at her. "I am not your only child. You make it sound like my one purpose in life is to reproduce so you can have grandchildren."

"After all the things I've done for you, I think you owe me that much," Angela said.

"Fine." Jane took her wallet from her pocket and pulled out her card. "I'll pay then."

"No," Angela said, pushing her card in the direction of the cashier. "It's my treat. I'm still your mother."

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The hotel ballroom was lit up in emerald green and white lights. Maura stood at the front. Before her, the people she loved, and respected sat at tables, waiting for her to speak. Yet all she wanted to do was retreat to a toilet cubicle and lock the door. Unfortunately, hundreds of eyes were staring back at her.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she said, clutching the slip of paper on which she'd printed her notes. "Family, friends. Thank you all for joining me in a celebration of my birthday. I am humbled and honoured to host this event, in partnership with the Lowenstein Foundation. I met Joshua Lowenstein fifteen years ago when I worked on a double homicide case. He was a teenager and I was new to my career. I was greatly moved by the difficulties Joshua faced after his parents were murdered. He was lucky to have grandparents who gave him everything he needed, and fortunate to have inherited his parent's wealth. Tonight he is a dear friend, and the founder of the foundation named in honour of his late parents. I am blessed to be able to spend my birthday celebration raising money for a cause that is so important. I have spent much of my life giving my time and resources to good causes, and tonight is no different. Please, give what you can, so that children who have lost their parents can have the futures they may not be able to afford otherwise. Don't forget we also have a silent auction with some fantastic prizes donated to the cause. There's copious amounts of wine, a fabulous band, and an exquisite five course meal. Please enjoy the evening."

She stepped down from the stage to a round of applause. The room was abuzz with people, conversation shared freely across tables and between groups. Maura retreated to her own table, to the seat beside Jane.

"You did great," Jane said, placing a hand on her arm.

Maura smiled. She didn't feel like she did great at all. She knew her reason for hosting such event was note-worthy, its purpose would be part of the legacy she built through charitable work. But niggling in the back of her mind were two things; her age, and the lack of progress with her personal goals.

"Thank you," she said, forcing her smile to reach her eyes. She picked up her glass of wine and took a sip. "You were right; it is important that I didn't cancel."

"Why would you want to cancel?" Angela asked from Jane's other side. "You only turn forty once. Besides, they say fifty's the new forty. Which makes forty the new thirty."

"If only science worked in the same way catchphrases did," she said. To be able to shave off a decade would be a benefit to her future, the future she still clung onto in ways she hadn't anticipated. She stood up, her wine in hand, as she moved away from the table. "I must say hello to my guests."

Once around the room, Maura greeted friends, acquaintances and her parents. The conversation was light, several envelopes were stuffed into her hands and she came away with cheques for amounts some families could only dream of holding. She placed them in a box, refilled her wine, and sat down for the first course.

Five courses later, Maura ran her hands across her stomach. The food was as superb as she'd expected, though she'd eaten a little too much. A waiter came by and refilled her glass, and she drank it quicker than she anticipated. When another waiter came by, she refilled it once more.

"I can't wait to get this thing off," Jane said, tugging at the edges

of her dress.

"I think you look beautiful," Maura said.

Jane pouted. "Not as beautiful as you. You know I'm not into dresses but yours is stunning, Maur."

"It cost more than you probably earn in a month," she admitted, a fact that filled her only with regret.

For years she'd indulged in the finer things in life - the very best champagne, expensive wines, clothing that the majority of her friends would never be able to afford. For the first time in a long time, she saw how frivolous that was. Yes, she donated money to a multitude of causes, and she worked hard for her wages. She deserved some indulgence. It just felt so hollow now.

"I'll be back," Jane said, resting a hand on Maura's shoulder as she moved towards the front of the room.

Maura watched her walk away, and wondered what it would look like if the two of them had a child together. Given that they were not in a relationship; the whole concept of co-parenting would be ultimately more complicated. There would undoubtedly need to be contracts drawn up, agreements decided upon, and a set of rules to govern how they proceeded. If she decided to accept Jane's offer.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Jane shouted, her voice carried through the sound system. Maura watched as Jane stood at the front of the room, looking anything but comfortable. The event was not your average party, Maura recognised that. It was not an environment she expected Jane to enjoy, or be particularly interested in. Her standing up and talking filled Maura with so much respect for her, that she felt tears sting her eyes. Jane wasn't one for fancy events and yet she was still there, talking to the room, because of her. "I wanted to say a few words about Doctor Maura Isles. I've known Maura for a long time. She's my best friend, and a wonderful colleague. It's taken her a long time to come out of her shell, to blossom as the beautiful person that she is today. She's an intelligent, kind hearted, and funny person who I am thankful to have in my life. I'd like you all to raise your glasses, and wish Maura a Happy Birthday."

In unison, the room lifted a glass and repeated Jane's sentiment. Maura pawed at her cheeks. She finished off her glass of wine, despite knowing full well that she was reaching her limit.

"I love you," Maura said, wrapping her arms around Jane's shoulders on her return to the table and pulling her in tightly.

"You too," Jane said, kissing her on the cheek and sitting back down.

Within the hour, the band were in full swing and couples were on the dance floor moving in unison to the music. Maura sipped another glass of wine. Her head felt a little fluffy. People came over, wished her well, congratulated her on the fine event, and shook her hand. There was life in the party long after the food had been cleared away, and another round of speeches had been shared. The silent auction winners came in, and more envelopes exchanged hands.

"Time to dance," Maura said, placing her empty wine glass on the table and tugging at Jane's hand. She groaned, but followed her anyway. They moved across the dance floor, through upbeat tracks and slower songs. Men and women wrapped their arms around each other and Maura felt her heart ache for the relationship she had yet to find. She reached her arms around Jane's neck.

"Have you had a good time?" Jane asked, silently allowing Maura to slow dance with her.

"I think we've raised a lot of money," she said.

"That's not what I asked."

"I need another drink," Maura said, dropping her hands and returning to the table.

At her heel, Jane followed her back across the room and they sat in silence, watching the dancers, with wine glasses in their hands. Maura sipped continuously, until another couple of glasses were empty and she felt her knees weaken.

"Ladies and gentlemen, can I have everyone's attention, please." Joshua Lowenstein stood at the front of the room. The band had taken a break. He held up the box in which the cheques had been placed. "You can return to your evening in a few moments, I just wanted to inform you that up til now we have raised thirty-four thousand dollars."

The room erupted into a round of applause. Maura stood up, a smile spread across her face and she nodded at Joshua. He nodded back, thanked everyone for their contribution and retreated back to his own table. Maura placed a hand on the back of her chair as the world span.

"Whoa, careful there," Jane said, reaching out to Maura's other arm. She grasped for Jane's shoulder.

"I feel sick," Maura said, her stomach twisted up.

"You did amazing tonight," Jane said, standing up.

"All that money."

Maura clung to Jane's dress, her fingers wrapped tightly around the material. Jane's hand slipped around her waist and supported her weakening knees. She tried to speak but her mouth had become very dry and words a jumbled mess in her mind.

"I think it's time for bed," Jane said.

They walked out of the room and through the hotel lobby, up the elevator and into Maura's suite. She fell down against the bed sheets, pulling Jane down beside her.

"I should go home."

"Stay," Maura said, edging up the bed until her head rested on a pillow.

Jane kicked off her shoes and lay down beside Maura. "I don't like seeing you so sad."

"I'm fine." She rubbed at her eyes. Her emotions had reached their limit and tears spilled down her cheeks. "Really fine."

"Don't be sad, Maura," Jane said, running her thumb across Maura's face.

"I want a baby," she said, pushing Jane's hand down away from her cheek. She clung to it between them. Her eyes fixed on Jane's. "I want us to have a baby."

Jane raised an eyebrow. "Are you sure?"

"It's my only chance."

"I don't believe that," Jane said.

"Don't you want a baby with me?" Maura asked, swiping at her face. "I thought you wanted a baby with me."

"I do. If you want to, we can have a baby."

"Yay." She held her hands up above her head until they reached the bed head. "The best. You're my best."

"I know," Jane said, running a hand along the side of Maura's face.

"What do we do?"

"What do you mean?"

"How do we have a baby?" Maura grasped the pillow beside her head. "You have an egg and I have an egg, and we really need sperm."

Jane rolled her eyes. "You're drunk."

"No, I'm not. I can still recite the periodic table starting from Hydrogen. Helium, Lithium, Beryllium."

"Now's not the time," Jane said. "Get some sleep."

"Boron, Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen."

"Sleep, Maura."

She closed her eyes, and yawned loudly. "Fluorine, Neon, Sodium, Magnesium..."

3. Chapter 3

****Author Notes****:** Thank you for even more response from this story - I think it's going to be an interesting one to explore, and I can't wait to share more of it with you.**

* * *

><p>"What's this?" Jane asked, staring down at the folder placed on her desk.<p>

"It's research," Maura said.

"Into?"

"The thing we discussed."

Jane raised an eyebrow. "The baby thing?"

"Let's keep this on the low down," Maura said, her eyes narrowed in Jane's direction.

"I think you mean down low."

"Either way," Maura said. "Until we've finalised the legalities and conceived, I don't think we should be talking about it. Particularly not in a public arena."

Jane stood and, folder in hand, ushered Maura toward the elevator. "Which is why you're giving me your research at work?"

"It's not ideal, but I was excited."

The elevator doors opened and they stepped inside. Jane pressed the button for the basement and waited.

"Please can you read it and have it back to me by tomorrow," Maura said, motioning toward the folder. "I've highlighted specific areas of importance and made a few notes. I've also included a list of considerations to be made before we take this forward."

"A list?" Jane opened the folder and stared down at the eighteen item list. Silently, she ran a finger along it. "Schools? Maura, the kid isn't even a kid and you want to discuss schools?"

The elevator doors opened. Jane closed the folder and they stepped out. Maura opened her mouth to speak but Jane clamped a hand across it and pushed her through the door to her office. She closed it behind them.

"What are you doing?" Maura asked.

"Trying to keep this private, which despite saying you wanted to keep it on the down low, have done anything but. Now go."

"Go where?"

"Speak, Maura; you can speak now."

"Oh. Well, if you want to get your child into the very best educational institutes, you have to register them before they're born."

"Really?" Jane asked, returning to the list. She perched on the edge of the couch. "Conception date? Why do we need to decide on a conception date?"

Maura sat down beside her. "There has been copious amounts of

research done into the success rates of summer born babies. If we choose to have a child born in the summer, we may risk their future endeavours. It's all in the file."

Pinching the bridge of her nose and running her fingers over her eye, Jane sighed. "This isn't how most people have babies."

"It isn't?"

"No, Maura. They have sex, get pregnant, and decide everything after the birth."

"That doesn't sound very effective."

Jane coughed and covered the smile gracing her lips. "I can guarantee it's worked one hundred per cent of the time for male and female couples."

"That can't be accurate, where did you read that?"

"I didn't read it, Maura." Jane flicked through the research. "It's common sense. Anyone who's managed to have a baby without any medical intervention will not have spent hours researching whatever and deciding on schools."

"That makes no sense to me."

"Maura." Jane lifted up a printed document and flicked through several pages. "Why is there a list of seventy-two fertility clinics in here?"

"I wanted to be thorough."

"This one's in London," Jane said, holding it up and pointing to the bottom of the first sheet of paper. "In the United Kingdom."

"I didn't want to discount overseas options because of location. The clinic in London is one of the best in the world."

Placing the folder on the table, Jane ripped the list of clinics in half and tossed it on top. She folded her arms across her chest as Maura's chin dropped.

"Let's do it the old fashioned way."

"Unless you're going to reveal that you were actually born with male genitalia, I doubt that would be possible."

Rolling her eyes, Jane picked the folder up again. "All we need is some swimmers and something to shove it up there," Jane said. "It can't be that difficult."

"You want to have a baby the lesbian way?"

"Why not? Works for lesbians."

"There are medical procedures that emulate the turkey baster method," Maura said. "I would really prefer we do this via a certified professional. Whilst I am not in the least bit concerned about you poking about in my nether region, I would rather we did it under

close supervision."

Jane pursed her lips together. "You'd rather someone watch me feel you up?"

"Jane, be serious."

"I am." She handed the folder to Maura. "We don't need hours of computer time, or lists. We just need a bit of handsome sperm and a moment alone."

"I thought you would prefer a doctor insert the sample," Maura said. "I expected you to say 'ew, that's never gonna happen'."

"Ordinarily I wouldn't want to be anywhere near your underwear," Jane said. "But this is our baby we're talking about. I want to be able to tell him or her the story of how I got you pregnant one day. Besides, I want to be there for the birth and I'm going to see a whole lot of stuff I don't want to. So I might as well get a head start."

x

The room was clinical and cold, not unlike any hospital room Maura had ever been in – aside from the children's wards. Given the happier reason for visiting the clinic, she felt disappointed. Fertility was supposed to be a positive thing, and she hadn't realised just how much a dull coloured wall could affect her mood.

"How can I help you, Ms Isles?"

"Doctor Isles," Maura said, a typical response to anyone's assumption about her status. She forged a smile. "Maura."

"How can I help you, Maura?" he repeated.

"I'd like you to test my fertility level."

He glanced at the closed door behind her. "Would you rather wait for your husband to arrive?"

"No," Maura said, frowning. "I would not. I do not have a husband, and I'm incensed at your assumption that I do."

"My apologies. Is there someone else you would like to be here? A female partner perhaps?"

Maura pursed her lips and clasped her hands over her knee. "I do not need to be in a relationship to want to test my level of fertility, please proceed with the tests before I report you to your superior."

"Very well," he said, maintain a modicum of calm. He pulled up a file on his tablet computer. "I have a few routine questions to ask before we begin. How long have you been trying to get pregnant?"

"I haven't yet."

He raised an eyebrow. "And how old are you?"

"Forty."

"Are your periods regular or irregular?"

"They've been like clockwork since I turned twenty. Aside from a few months in my twenty-sixth year when I suffered from an immense level of stress."

"Have you had any fertility tests and/or treatment before?"

"No."

"Have you been pregnant before?"

"No."

"When do you plan to become pregnant?"

"As soon as is possible."

"Are you currently suffering from a sexually transmitted infection?"

"No."

"Have you ever suffered from a sexually transmitted infection?"

"Definitely not."

"Are you aware that given your age you have a higher chance of infertility, or low fertility?"

"I am."

"We'll start with a simple blood test, where we'll check your hormone level. Depending on the results we may progress to an ultrasound scan. Finally, if appropriate, we can do a hysterosalpingogram, where we."

Maura cut him off. "I know what a HSG is."

"Very well." He stood up and opened a couple of drawers. "If you'd like to take off your jacket and roll up your sleeve, I'll take a sample."

Twenty minutes later, Maura sat in her car analysing the small bruise forming on her arm where they'd taken blood. She wished she'd invited Jane along. The doctor was obviously barely out of medical school and she didn't appreciate his tone of voice. Attempting to have a baby at her age was hard enough without his constant glares. Regardless, she anticipated the coming days to be particularly difficult. Waiting on the results of tests was something she did on a daily basis. However, most of the time she was not waiting to find out her own chances of becoming a mother. She dialed Jane's number and rested her cell phone against her ear.

"Would you like to come for dinner?" she said.

Pouring herself a glass of wine, Maura carried it across to the dining table along with a beer for Jane. She put the drinks down and seated herself opposite her friend. Despite her better judgment, Maura had agreed to put most of the baby list aside for now. Though she planned to bring it up again later.

"We should at least talk about sperm donation," Maura said.

"Where's the nearest sperm bank?" Jane asked, forking a piece of asparagus into her mouth.

Maura opened the folder and pulled out a slip of paper. "Before we consider a sperm bank, I came up with some other options."

"Other options." Jane frowned, taking the slip of paper out of her hand. "What other options?"

The silence was palpable. Jane's eyes moved down the list, growing wider as she reached the bottom. She placed the paper on the table and stared at Maura, her mouth agape.

"Are you going to say something?"

Shaking her head, Jane lifted her bottle of beer up and swallowed a couple of mouthfuls.

"What can I say, Maura?" she asked. "This list is made up of every single man who has been in our lives in the last ten years."

"For the sake of our child's future health, it is important that we have a full medical history. Using sperm donated from a friend or relative is the most successful way of gaining that."

Jane drank some more. "Why would we want a child using your ex-boyfriends sperm? _Or mine_?"

"Why not?" It was a perfectly logical option. Their ex-partners were people they had at one point in time felt some attraction towards. That meant any child conceived using their sperm would be a child they could have had if their situations had been different. Jane pinched her nose and closed her eyes. Maura placed her cutlery on her plate and pushed it aside. "Do you have a headache?"

"No, Maura. I need you to stop making lists."

"Jack is an excellent candidate, probably the best out of everyone on the list. He's attractive. He's already fathered a child, and has shown immense paternal instincts. He's also shown a level of intelligence and maturity."

"He's also had sex with you."

"Would you rather the donor have had sex with you?"

"No!"

"Is it a problem for you if we use a donor who has had sex with me?" Maura sipped her wine. "If Jack and I were to have a child together,

that is almost certainly the route we would take."

"But the baby isn't yours and Jacks."

"What about Tommy or Frankie, then?" She pointed to their names on the list. "If we use one of your brothers' sperm, then the baby can have a mixture of mine and your genetics."

"I think I just threw up in my mouth." Jane rolled her eyes. "I don't need the kid to look like me, Maura. I'd rather the kid didn't."

"Then what about Kent? He's young and virile, he's not currently in a relationship, so there are no issues with a partner being unhappy about his donating. He's close enough that we can learn his medical history, but not so close that he's related to you."

"I'm not taking sperm from a man who walks around in a skirt."

"A kilt."

"Same thing."

"A kilt is traditional Scottish dress favoured by men. A skirt is an item of clothing that is more socially acceptable on a woman."

"No, Maura. Not Kent."

"How about Benny?"

"Who the fuck is Benny?"

"The barrister who works at the coffee house down the street from BPD."

Jane's eyes bugged and she stared at Maura. "Really?"

Maura sighed. "Is there anybody on the list you would not have a problem asking?"

"I think we should go for an anonymous sperm donor."

"But the medical history," Maura said.

"Screw the medical history," Jane said. "I'm sure they've thought of that at the sperm bank. We just need to find someone who is willing to meet with you to discuss medical history, and someone who is willing to not meet me so I don't have to picture the guy every time our kid talks."

"I'm willing to look into anonymous donors."

"Thank you. Now can you please stop obsessing over this? All we need is some sperm, anything else doesn't matter."

"Except a formal contract."

"Maura."

"I will not budge on a contract," she said. "If something were to

happen to either of us, or for any reason we were to become hostile toward each other, I want to know that our child is protected by a legal document."

"Fine." Jane lifted her beer bottle up to her lips but nothing came out. She reached for Maura's wine and emptied the glass. "Formal contract, anonymous sperm donor. Now can we get back to talking about whatever it is we usually discuss?"

"Don't you want to start looking at donors?"

"Not tonight I don't. I have plans with the Sox."

x

Paperwork piled up on Jane's desk. The three cases they had on the go were running the team into the ground. She ran her fingers through her hair and read through the case file for the fourth time. The murder of Anton Jackson, aged twenty, had occurred a couple of weeks ago. With little evidence and any leads running cold, Jane knew it was destined for the cold case pile.

"Think we'll ever catch them?" Jane asked.

"Looking slim," said Korsak, who was working on leads in the murder of Simone Jefferson.

Frankie banged against his desk with both hands, one after the other, like a drummer. He stood up and shouted. "Got it!"

"That's not fair," Jane said. "Your case is newer."

"So?"

"So I'm not giving you twenty bucks."

"A bet's a bet."

"Last time I make a bet with you," she said, pulling out a couple of crumpled notes and tossing them across to his desk. "What did you find?"

"Louis Sims clocked in at eight thirty-two, and was found dead in the store cupboard at nine fifteen. Maura estimated his time of death to be eight thirty-five. Given the amount of blood loss he was stabbed at least ten minutes earlier. Leaving a three minute window between him officially arriving at work and his time of death."

"Give me something I don't already know," Jane said.

"CCTV footage shows Louis arrived at eight sixteen. He entered the building but failed to clock in."

"Leaving a fourteen minute window instead of three."

"Exactly." Frankie sat down on the edge of his desk. "The only other employees in the building at that time were Rose Ravero and Lisa Polk, making them our prime suspects."

"Nice job, Rizzoli," Korsak said, placing his case file on the desk.

He stood up and grabbed his jacket. "Let's go speak to them."

Frankie holstered his gun and fastened his jacket button. "You coming, Jane?"

Her cellphone buzzed in her pocket. "Nah, I'd better take this. Go ahead. Catch me up later."

x

"I'll be down in a minute," Jane said, hanging up her cell phone and slipping it into her pocket. She grabbed her jacket from her chair and carried it down to the Division One Caf  . She approached a table in the centre of the room.

"Detective Rizzoli," Silver Heyes said, standing up and holding out her hand.

"Hello Ms Heyes." Jane shook her hand.

"Silver, please. It's nice to see you again," Silver said. She motioned towards the seat opposite and sat back down. "I wanted to update you on Adam."

"Adam?" Jane's brow furrowed. She took the spare seat. "You mean Billy? How is he? At least he has a name now."

"He's well," she said. "You'll be happy to know his mother returned for him within a couple of days. She was physically and emotionally exhausted. We're working closely with her to ensure she has the support she needs."

"That's good news." Jane leaned forward, her hands face down on the table in front of her. "You didn't have to come all the way out here, a phone call would have been fine."

"I wanted an excuse to see you again."

"What do you need an excuse for?" Jane sat back in her seat, the crease between her eyebrows deepened.

"I wanted to know if I could buy you a coffee sometime."

"I'd never say no to a coffee." Jane smiled. "I probably drink too much of it."

"Great." Silver took a pen out of her jacket pocket and scribbled a number on a napkin. She pushed it across the table. "This is my personal number. Give me a call any time."

"Will do," Jane said, picking it up. She stood up. Adam's father's case wasn't going to solve itself, nor were the other two they'd been working on. She pushed the napkin into her pocket. "I should get on."

"Of course, don't let me keep you."

Standing up opposite her, Silver closed the gap between them and pressed her lips gently against the corner of Jane's mouth. She

froze.

"See you soon, I hope," Silver said, her bottom lip tucked under her teeth as she waved and walked out of the café.

Jane watched her leave, felt the world continue to turn around her. Police officers entered in uniform, detectives jumped the queue, and the barrister made coffee after coffee. She shook her head and walked toward the elevator.

x

The office door closed. Jane stood pacing back and forth across the tiled flooring. Maura tried to focus on her phone call, but Jane's presence was distracting.

"I'll be in at four to get the results, thank you," Maura said. She placed her phone down and looked up at Jane. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," she said, stopping in front of Maura. "I just got hit on by the woman from the DCF."

Maura sat upright. "She hit you? Why?"

"Hit on. She picked me up, Maura. She asked me out on a date."

"What did you say?"

She threw her hands up in the air. "I said yes."

Maura's eyes opened a little wider. The unexpected nature of Jane's visit was a welcomed distraction from her thoughts. "You said yes?"

"I didn't realise what I was saying yes to," Jane said, walking towards the door and back again. "I thought she was being friendly."

A smirk spread across Maura's face. The whole situation was mildly entertaining. "Instead she wants to see inside your panties."

"Shut up," Jane said, slouching into the chair on the opposite side of Maura's desk. "She kissed me. On my face. In front of the whole division."

"What will you do next?"

"Burn my face."

"Come on, Jane." Maura rested her chin on her hand. "It can't have been that bad."

She rolled her eyes. "Can I at least burn the napkin she wrote her personal number on?"

"Why would you want to do that?"

"Because I'm not interested."

"Not even a little bit?"

Jane frowned. "What are you implying, Maura?"

Maura clasped her hands in front of her. She'd read more literature on the matter than an average person. "Sexuality is fluid."

"Since when?"

"Since always. Policy is behind the times. It's all there in the research."

"You want me to go on a date with a woman?"

"Why not?" Maura leaned forward. Neither of them had explicitly discussed their sexual preferences before. Whilst Maura didn't anticipate Jane to hold any particularly strong homosexual feelings, she also hadn't ruled out the possibility. "It's not like you've had many other offers lately."

"_No_." Jane cleared her throat. "I am not going on a date with a woman."

Maura sat back in her seat. "Well, that's your decision. But I think you could be making a big mistake."

* * *

><p>Author Notes****: I'd love to know your opinions on the various goings on - e.g. Silver Heyes (should she/shouldn't she?). Is there anything you'd particularly like to see in this story? I'm quite flexible at the moment and I'm willing to take on suggestions. I know you guys have lots of thoughts on these things!**

4. Chapter 4

Author Notes**: You guys...thank you so much for the amazing response, once more. It seems many of you are enjoying this story and I am so glad to hear that. I don't usually write fluffier chapter fics. I don't know if I ever have? My default mode is angst and I struggle to come up with ideas for something on the fluffier end of the spectrum. I know there's a bit of drama, but I don't think you can really get a fic without any. I really appreciate the response and I hope you continue to enjoy it. I seem to be flying through this faster than anticipated...**

* * *

><p>Jane gripped the coffee mug in both hands. It was early. Maura was still asleep, or so she assumed. When she let herself in first thing, the lights were off and there was no sign of Maura. She made herself a mug of coffee and proceeded to stare into it. A couple of dark brown specks floated on top. She stirred it again, until they dissolved into the hot liquid.<p>

"How long have you been here?" Maura asked, rubbing her eyes. She entered the kitchen and switched on the coffee machine.

She checked her watch. "About an hour."

"I'm going to shower," Maura said. Pulling her gown tighter around her middle, she left Jane alone again.

Mornings were easy. Jane usually woke up before her alarm, unless she'd had a late night. That morning she showered quickly and hopped straight into the car. Maura was nearly always awake when she arrived. Most mornings they would sit and have breakfast together before work. Maura would bore her with the latest medical journal she'd been reading, and Jane would bore her in return with the latest Red Sox statistics.

A baby would change everything.

"Eggs?" Maura asked. She reentering the room fully clothed, with a towel round her hair.

"Please."

Jane liked her life just the way it was. She liked her independence, and her ability to work all the hours under the sun. She didn't really take many vacations, and even if they forced her to, she'd probably hang around Fenway Park or the Dirty Robber. She was a creature of habit and the thought of that changing scared her.

But it also excited her.

"Would you like to come with me to meet with my lawyer?"

"Maura," Jane said, rolling her eyes.

"You don't have to," she said, taking a box of eggs out of the refrigerator. "But I will be going this afternoon at two thirty. It's important that we sign a contract before we attempt to conceive."

Years ago when Jane suffered the miscarriage, it reminded her just how much she wanted something more in her life. She talked shit about marriage and babies like none of it really mattered. But deep down it did. Her mother brought her up to expect to raise a family. Somewhere deep inside she knew she wanted it.

"It might not be easy," Jane said. Despite poo-pooing much of Maura's research, she had done some of her own. It was harder to have a child later in life, that was a fact. The risk of said child having a chromosomal abnormality was higher, and she didn't know how she felt about it.

Maura cracked open an egg into the frying pan. "There are a couple of options we can try."

"It's not the same, though, is it?"

"The same as what?"

"Having sex."

"A lot of couples who struggle to conceive have to use other

options."

Jane sighed. "Don't you want to do it the way you always thought you would?"

Maybe it was the lack of decent men in her life that made it all the harder. One day she'd given up hope. One day she decided that her career was more important than anything a man could offer her. So she put her heart and soul into working, into saving lives, and what did she have to show for it? A couple of awards and a badge that shined when she polished it.

Maura stirred the eggs in the pan until they scrambled slowly. "I thought we'd discussed this. It was your idea to co-parent. Do you want to change your mind?"

"No," Jane said. She stood up and poured herself a fresh coffee from the machine. Chromosomal abnormalities or not, Jane wanted a child as much as Maura did. "I just don't want to take it away from you."

"You're not." Maura took two plates from the cupboard. "I want to do this with you, Jane."

"Have you had enough time to think about it?"

"Of course I have," she said, emptying the pan onto the plates. "I've done the research. I know the statistics around conception post forty and I know the risks. We know each other better than some married couples; we have differing expertise that we can bring to our child's life. I can't think of anyone better to raise a child with."

"If you're sure."

"I am."

Hearing Maura talk about her regrets reminded her only of her own mortality. Her body clock didn't scream the way Maura's apparently had been doing. Maybe that was why she didn't care to carry the child herself. If the question came up, she wouldn't be against it, but it didn't drive her.

Maura placed the eggs on the counter and Jane picked up a fork. "Thanks, Maura, they're great."

Maura was her family, and sharing a child made sense in too many ways. No romantic partner had ever known her the way Maura did. They loved each others' flaws like they were their own. They were in it for the long haul.

x

"I need that tissue sample," Jane said, pacing in and out of the doorway.

"The longer you stand there making comments, the longer it will take," Maura said, adjusting the microscope. When her view cleared, she switched the slide. "I know you're pouting and you can stop that."

"Me? Pout?" Jane folded her arms across her chest.

Maura lifted her gaze. "I know you're thrilled to have a breakthrough in your case, but I can only work so fast."

"You're quicker than the DNA lab," Jane said. "Can't you hurry them up?"

"I've already told you it'll be a week. That's faster than it was going to be." She returned her attention to the sample in front of her. Glancing through the microscope, she switched between the samples. Once she spotted what she was looking for, she maintained her position.

"Maura!"

"Patience, Jane." She switched slides again. Her lips curved at the edges, disguised only by the microscope in front of her. "You do realise when the baby is conceived, we'll have to wait for it to arrive."

Jane looked around the lab. Kent was out on an errand and the other technicians hadn't arrived yet. "I thought we'd agreed not to talk about it in public?"

Maura finally stood up. "Your sample is a match."

"What does that mean?"

"It means the fibre found on the body is the exact fibre found on the murder weapon."

"All I have to do is find out where the fibre came from, and a link to someone."

Taking the slides out of the microscope, Maura logged them on the evidence record. "You're one step closer to solving the case."

"Not close enough," Jane said.

"I've already told you," Maura replied. "I cannot make the DNA lab work any faster. It takes as long as it takes."

"Fine." Jane rolled her eyes and headed for the open door. "I'll see you later."

x

The line at the Division One Caf   was halfway to the door. Jane stood mid-way, tapping her foot against the tiles. She checked her watch every few moments and groaned. Until she received back the DNA results from the lab, she could barely progress the case, but it still bugged her to be standing in line. She had better things to be doing.

"Jane Rizzoli?"

She turned to her right. Silver Heyes stood across the caf  . Her eyes narrowed in her direction. Two visits since she came to collect Adam? Jane cleared her throat and forged a smile.

"Silver, what are you doing here? Did you have an update on Adam?"

"No, not exactly. He's doing fine." She stepped toward her and joined her in the line. "I came because, well, I know it's silly of me. You didn't call so I should have just accepted that you weren't interested. But I had to know."

"Oh." Turning around, Jane checked the café for nosey detectives. Discussing the date she hadn't realised she'd said yes to was not something she hoped to do in such a public space.

"I'm sorry." Silver shrugged her shoulders. "I probably look so desperate."

"Not at all," Jane said. She reached a hand out to her shoulder, then retracted it before making contact. She didn't want to give her any mixed messages. "I'm sorry if we got our wires crossed. I'm not gay."

"Really?" Silver's eyebrows pulled together. "I could have sworn I was getting serious vibes from you."

"No, I'm as straight as the pope is Catholic."

"Oh God, I'm so sorry." She placed her hands on her cheeks. "I'm so embarrassed."

"Don't be." Jane smiled, and edged forward in the line. "I'm flattered, really."

Silver backed away. "I should go. I'm sorry."

"Wait," Jane stepped toward her. When someone filled the space she vacated, she pushed herself back into the line, her eyes narrowed in the direction of a portly man behind her. She reached toward Silver. "You don't have to go. We could still get a coffee, if you want."

"Now?"

"Sure."

x

The office door slammed closed, making Maura jump. She looked up to find Jane staring at her, her eyes bugged and her hands moving incessantly over each other.

"What's wrong?" Maura asked.

"How do you know if a date is a date?"

Frowning, Maura motioning to the seat opposite her desk. Jane dropped onto the couch by the door. She stood up and joined her.

"You know I fail to notice many social cues," Maura said. "I'm probably not the most qualified person to ask. What happened?"

"Silver turned up when I was buying coffee. I tried to let her down but she looked so sad, so I asked her to join me."

"You invited someone who invited you for a coffee date, to join you for coffee?" Maura clasped her hands over her knees. Her lack of understanding of social cues did not make her a complete novice, but she was out of her depth. Silver's actions seemed pretty obvious, it was Jane's that confused her.

"When you put it like that it sounds like I asked her out," Jane said.

Maura raised an eyebrow. Playing the devil's advocate didn't come naturally to her, but she didn't know what else to do. Jane's actions were contradictory to say the least. "Was that not what you were intending doing?"

"Not on a date."

"Return to the moment you tried to let her down," Maura said, trying to piece together what Jane was telling her.

Jane slouched back in her seat. "She came up to me while I was standing in line waiting for coffee and I told her I wasn't gay."

"So, she knows you're not interested in a romantic relationship," Maura said.

"Not exactly." Jane placed her hands on her thighs. "I told her I wasn't gay, she got embarrassed and tried to leave. I invited her for coffee."

"How is informing her of your sexual orientation not letting her know your intentions?"

"She asked me out. I said no. Then I asked her to join me for coffee. I tried to avoid sending mixed messages, and then I did."

"Did she indicate any confusion?"

"When she was leaving she said she'd like to do it again sometime," Jane said.

"Oh."

"Oh?"

"Did you enjoy her company?"

"Yeah," Jane said, her lips curved involuntarily. Wiping her hand across her mouth, she cleared her throat. Once she'd returned her hand to her thigh again, Maura noticed the smile had gone.

"What exactly is the problem, Jane?"

"I'm not gay."

"I think she knows that."

"I don't want to lead her on."

"It sounds like you've made her very much aware of your position."

"Then why does she want to do it again?"

"I thought you would be better equipped to answer that."

"Why? I have no idea what lesbians are like."

"I think they're like you and I, Jane," Maura said. "They're women first and foremost."

"And that makes me better equipped, how?"

The alarm on Maura's phone rang loudly across the office. She stood up and took her phone off the desk, turning off the alarm.

"I have to leave."

"Now?"

"I have an appointment with my lawyer, you're welcome to come along."

Jane sighed. "Still no, Maur."

She picked up her purse and placed her jacket over her forearm. "Good luck with your quandary. Meet me for dinner?"

"Only if you're cooking."

"How about Chinese takeout?"

"Are you paying?"

"I'm going to be carrying your child, I think you should pay," Maura said. She held up her free arm as she walked out of the room, grinning from ear to ear.

x

Takeout containers cluttered the coffee table, filled with Maura's favourite foods. It was the least Jane could do under the circumstances. As she had rightly pointed out earlier that day, she was going to carry her future son or daughter. Buying takeout was the least she could do.

"Did you reach any conclusions about Silver?" Maura asked.

"No," Jane said, fighting with a piece of chicken that had fallen into her egg fried rice.

"Have you made any plans to see her again?"

"No," Jane repeated. "Can we please talk about something else?"

"I've had my lawyer draw up the documents," Maura said. She opened her briefcase and handed a copy of the document to Jane. "This is a draft copy of a generic contract they use in non-biological parenting cases. If you'd like to highlight the particular points you'd like to see in our contract, and return it to me with comments, then we can get a final document written up."

"That's not what I meant when I said let's talk about something else."

"What else would we talk about?"

"Literally any subject topic that isn't Silver, or lawyers."

"Now that I've handed you the document, I think we should discuss it."

Jane stabbed at the piece of chicken with her chopstick and placed it in her mouth. "I don't need to sign a contract, Maura."

"Yes, you do," she said.

She put the container on the coffee table and scanned the document. Her eyes narrowed as they travelled down the page. Several pages later, she looked up. "I wouldn't ever stop you from seeing our kid, Maura. Why would you think that?"

"I don't," Maura said. "But we have to cover all future possibilities. What about when things change?"

"Things are not going to change."

"Things have already changed."

"What do you mean?"

"You went on a date, Jane." She poured herself a glass of wine. "If that relationship becomes something of significance, then I want to protect us both."

Jane sighed. The insinuation that she had been on a date with a woman irked her. Maura was crossing a line and she was teetering dangerously close to the edge of her tether. "It wasn't a date. We're just _friends_."

"It could be a date, though. If you wanted it to be."

"I _don't_."

"If not this date, the next one," Maura said. "Neither of us know our futures. What if you meet somebody tomorrow and want to have a family with them?"

All Jane wanted was a quiet evening with her friend. The last thing she wanted was to argue, yet again, over a non-existent child. The way things were going she didn't anticipate they'd get much further. "None of that changes this situation. We are having a child together. We're building a family that goes beyond marriage and relationships."

"You say that now," Maura said. "But what will it be like if you want to raise your own family?"

"What will it be like if you want to raise _yours_?"

"I don't anticipate that happening."

"Neither do I." Jane placed her hand on the couch between them. "I trust you. Don't you trust me?"

"Of course I do. But things can change. This arrangement we have is complex and I want to protect the baby."

"So do I."

"Then please, Jane, can you take this seriously?"

She ran her fingers across her temples. "We're going to be discussing this kid for the next twenty years, can we please just have one night where baby talk is off the table?"

"If we must."

"Thank you."

They fell into a silence. Jane picked up her container and commenced eating. Beside her, she could hear Maura chewing.

The amount of information that needed considering before they even thought about their anonymous donor was astounding. Sometimes Jane wished she could find someone to have a baby with, then maybe it wouldn't be such a complicated mess of contracts and lists. She knew it was, in part, due to Maura's nature. She needed to be in control, whereas Jane was quite happy to take each day as it came.

"Why did you ask Silver for coffee?"

"I don't know," Jane said, shrugging her shoulders.

"If you like her, it's okay."

Jane glared. "It's not like that."

"If it was, it would be okay."

"I don't want to discuss it anymore, Maura. Let me eat in peace."

"I know." She held her glass of wine up to her mouth. "But I wanted you to know that if it was like that, it would be okay."

x

When Maura met Jane all those years ago, she looked like a prostitute. In her defense, Jane was working undercover. The friendship they formed over the years was unconventional to say the least. They were like chalk and cheese, and on paper it didn't make sense. Maura was borderline autistic, something which she made sure to confirm later in life. Jane was your run of the mill detective who loved beer and baseball. The first time Maura met Jane after her case, she questioned her sexuality.

"I'm sorry for pushing you earlier," Maura said, holding her cellphone to her ear.

"I thought you were getting an early night," Jane replied.

Over the years, Maura had learned more about Jane as a person and had figured out her personality in some detail. In those early days she was not quite as adept as she had become at picking up on Jane's social cues. According to her research, Jane's personality matched up perfectly with that of a stereotypical lesbian.

"I couldn't sleep."

On a daily basis there was no evidence to support her hypothesis. Until they pretended to be in a relationship to scare off Giovanni. Even that was tentative based on the reasoning for their ruse.

"Silver's a nice person," Jane said. "But it's not like that. I don't have any friends outside of work, maybe it'd be nice to."

After saying goodnight earlier in the evening, Maura lay in bed questioning everything she knew about Jane. She said she wasn't interested in women, then asked Silver on a date. It didn't make sense to Maura at the time.

"I just want you to be happy," she said, pulling her bed sheets up to her chin.

Jane stayed silent for a moment. "Who says I'm not?"

5. Chapter 5

****Author Notes:** Thank you so much for following/favouriting, and especially the comments. I really enjoy reading through them - some of them make me laugh, some of them give me ideas, and some of them I wish I could answer but can't (guests). Thank you all so much and I hope you enjoy the update.**

* * *

><p>She sat on the couch sipping beer from a bottle, beads of condensation landed on her fingertips. Jane rested her elbow on her knee and leaned forward. It was not every day you sat in front of a laptop flicking through potential sperm donors. She reached for a handful of popcorn and chucked a few kernels into her mouth.<p>

"Take this seriously, Jane," Maura said, clicking on to the next person. "We're not at the movies."

"I am taking this seriously." She finished chewing and swallowed, before tossing another couple of pieces into her mouth. She pushed them to one side. "I just don't like the guy."

"You've seen one photograph and read a paragraph of information."

"So?"

"That is nowhere near enough information to know the suitability of his sperm."

"I'd rather think about something other than his sperm. Right now he's a jerk in a Yankees shirt."

Maura sighed. "You're discounting him because he doesn't support your favourite baseball team?"

"The Yankees are our biggest rivals, Maur."

It sounded like a reasonable reason to Jane. It took barely a second for her to discount him. He was entirely lacking in suitability and she wasn't about to back down anytime soon. Besides, he didn't look very friendly.

"Preference in baseball team is not a valid reason."

"Says you. Besides, I'm discounting him because he's a jerk."

"Fine," Maura said. "But that means I can discount the first man we put on the list because he wears glasses."

Rolling her eyes, Jane sipped on her beer. "I don't understand your problem with glasses. He looks as smart as you."

"My problem is that if our child decides they want to be a surgeon, or pilot, they should not have anything stopping them."

"Surely there's surgeons with glasses," Jane said.

"Wearing corrective lenses would put him or her at a direct disadvantage compared to those with twenty twenty vision. If you can veto based on baseball, I can veto based on our child's future career opportunities."

"Deal."

The crease between Maura's eyebrows made Jane smile. She enjoyed the verbal sparring. She enjoyed winning more, but she didn't mind compromising when it was with Maura. The jovial nature of their conversation reminded her of the reason why they'd chosen to do this. They were good together. They worked well as a team, even when they pissed each other off.

"I don't recall agreeing to those terms," Maura said.

"Too late," Jane replied.

"It's not too late."

"Yes, it is." Jane pulled the laptop round to get a better look. "He looks good."

"He has an overbite."

"How can you tell?"

"How can you _not_?"

Clicking through, another man came on the screen. Jane tilted her head to one side. His dark brown hair hung a little long over his brooding eyes. He was, by all definition, completely stunning.

"I want him," Jane said.

Maura leaned forward and scanned the information on the screen. "He looks good on paper, but he's not willing to meet anyone who may use his sample."

"Who said anything about using his sample?"

Maura raised an eyebrow. "_Oh_. You want to have sex with him."

"Don't you? Look at him!"

"He does look like your type," Maura said.

"I don't know about type, but he is hot."

"Tall, dark, handsome, broodingâ€|that is every man you've dated since we've known each other."

Jane's cell phone buzzed on the table. She opened up the message on screen, scowled, and locked the phone again.

"Everything okay?"

"She keeps messaging me."

"She obviously likes you," Maura said. "Funnily enough, the only part of the list Silver Heyes doesn't fit into, is being male."

Jane glared at Maura. "The only bit that actually matters is being male."

Silver's dark brown hair and brooding eyes were the first thing Jane noticed when she sat across from her at BPD. She stared at her like her whole life was caught up in that very moment. It was intimidating.

"Just stop, Maura." She sighed. "Please stop."

"I'm sorry," Maura replied, wrapping her fingers around Jane's hand as she clicked on to the next candidate. "I don't mean to push. I just want."

Jane cut her off. "Me to be happy. I don't think Silver's the one."

"Is there _anyone_ you're interested in?"

"Him," Jane said, pointing at the screen. "He's perfect."

"I meant as a date."

"No." She shook her head. "Now look at our future child's biological father."

Maura ran her finger down the information. "Biomedical scientist. Red Sox fan. Fathered sixteen children through four couples and a single mother, in addition to three of his own children. He's obviously virile. Willing to meet prospective parents. Open to full genetic testing. He's a definite shortlist candidate."

Crunching down on a handful of popcorn, Jane folded her arms across her chest and sat back. "Just in time for the game."

"We need a shortlist, Jane."

"But I'm bored."

She slouched in her seat and emptied the contents of her beer bottle into her mouth. If she was going to be held prisoner there, she would certainly need more alcohol.

"This is our child we're discussing. Would you rather he or she be left with genetic abnormalities or a predisposition to serious mental health conditions because you couldn't spend a few extra minutes looking for the perfect biological parent?"

"Ten more minutes," Jane said, cracking open another beer.

x

By the end of the search, Jane and Maura had gathered five short list candidates and three maybes. They'd searched through dozens of sperm donor candidates, the majority of which they'd discounted for various reasons. Maura finished adding their final candidate to their short list when Jane bashed her phone against the coffee table.

"Leave me alone."

"You could always call her," Maura said. "Perhaps if you let her know how you feel."

"I've tried brushing her off but she isn't getting the hint. She wants to be 'friends'."

"Do you have a problem with that proposal?"

"I don't need anymore friends," Jane said. Maura clicked through to the next candidate, still curious as to what else was out there. After accidentally double clicking, Jane tapped Maura's wrist. "Go back, go back."

"Did I miss one?"

She clicked the back button and waited for the page to load. Staring back at them from the laptop screen was Frank Rizzoli Senior. Jane shook her head and closed her eyes. Maura watched her with derision.

"No. No. No. I do not need to know that he's on this list. I do not want to picture what he did to get on this list."

"I didn't realise your father had donated sperm," Maura said, scrolling through his profile. Regardless of Jane's obvious feelings on the matter, Maura didn't understand her issue. "He comes across as really personable. It says here that he has helped two couples to become parents."

Jane covered her mouth with both hands. "I think I just threw up in my mouth."

"He's done a wonderful thing," Maura said.

Two families had children because of him. The marvels of modern science meant that they didn't need to remain childless, or wait years for a potential adoption. The many advantages of current procedures were the one thing that gave Maura hope of one day becoming a mother. Despite Jane's desire to do things 'the old fashioned way'.

"I cannot think about my father doing that," Jane said, pinching the bridge of her nose. She stared at Maura. "Two families? I have siblings out there I don't know about?"

"They're not your siblings," Maura said, placing a hand on Jane's arm to comfort her. "Biologically, yes. In every other way, no."

"Can we cross the older guy off the list?" Jane asked. "I changed my mind. I don't want to have the kid of someone with loads of older kids out there."

Maura checked the box and deleted him from their list. Seeing Frank Rizzoli Senior on the sperm donation page only sought to remind her that she liked the idea of keeping the Rizzoli bloodline. The only problem with that was Jane.

"I still think we should consider one of your brothers."

Jane pouted. "I don't like the idea of you having a child with one of my brothers."

"I'm not having a child with one of your brothers, I'm having one with you."

"Using my brother's sperm."

"You've already vetoed that idea. Let's cut down the list by one more person and we can take a break."

The page loaded and a young man with blonde hair and piercing blue eyes stared back at them. Reading through his profile earlier, he appeared a pretty good match. He was intelligent, friendly; he came across as caring. Maura liked the look of him, but she still held onto the idea of a donor that was closer to Jane in genetic makeup. Three of their candidates had dark hair, two of which had Italian in their bloodline. Candidate #8263 didn't fit those markers at all.

"So, which sperm do we want?" Jane asked.

Maura pulled up the rest of the shortlist options. "We don't have to pick one of these. There are plenty more options."

"We're not running a marathon for children, Maura, we don't need to vet every single candidate with a fine tooth comb."

Analysing the photographs, Maura's eyes landed on the yellow spots on one man's eyelids. She looked closer, zoomed into the photograph, then point to it.

"That one, Candidate #7582, is out."

"Why? I thought we liked him?"

"He has xanthelasmata. Our child could be at a higher risk of heart disease."

"Three to go," Jane said. "Which one do we want?"

"I'd rather sleep on it."

"Which one do you want, Maura?"

The pressure to decide didn't sit well with her. She retreated slightly. She needed time to process. She needed time to review each candidate further, to analyse their photos and read between the lines of their profiles. Deciding on a father for their child was not a simple job to be completed quickly. If Jane had had her way they'd have picked the first person they saw, and now she'd seen the yellow spots on his eyelids, he was far from an ideal candidate. If Maura had had her way, they'd have filtered through every option on the website. Bearing in mind that Jane was less inclined to go for an Italian descendent, and they couldn't decide on hair colour, pinpointing specifics was proving difficult.

"I'd like to speak with all of them."

"After you pick," Jane said.

Maura frowned. "What is the purpose of choosing between them if we are going to speak to them all?"

"I need you to pick one," Jane said.

"Pick what?"

Jane pushed the laptop screen closed and turned to face her mother, stood in the doorway. "Nothing, Ma."

"We were trying to decide on a movie," Maura said.

"Exactly, a movie," Jane replied. "Except that now I have to go to work."

"I didn't hear your phone," Maura said, picking up her own and turning it on. "I didn't get a call. Why didn't I get a call?"

Jane stood up. She slipped her cell phone into her pocket and backed away. "I have some urgent paperwork that I forgot about."

"Why do I get the feeling you're leaving because of me?" Angela asked. "I only came in here to get some milk, I ran out and I haven't

got time to go to the grocery store before my shift."

"I'll get you some milk on my way home," Jane said, walking toward her mother. She pressed her lips to her cheek and retreated toward the front door. Maura stood up and followed her.

"I'm not sure what work you have to do," Maura said, her voice low. "But you really should be kinder to your mother."

"She walked in on us without knocking."

"It's her _home_."

"The guest house is her home. The main house is not."

"I'll see you tomorrow, Jane," Maura said, ushering her out of the house and closing the door.

x

"We need to talk," Jane said, dropping onto the couch in Maura's office and putting her feet up on the table.

"About?" Maura asked, her eyes still fixed on the report in front of her.

Jane scowled. "Our living arrangements."

Barely glancing up, Maura responded. "What about them?"

"My mother can't live in the guest house if we're going to be parents."

Maura stopped typing, her eyes fixed on Jane's over her laptop. "Why not? And please take your feet off my coffee table."

"She's a helicopter, Maura." Jane removed her feet and leaned her elbows on her knees. "She'll be there hovering all day, every day. I can't deal with that at the best of times. Do you know what she'll be like when she knows there's going to be another grandchild?"

"I don't see any alternative solution," Maura said, proceeding to type once more.

Oxygen filled her lungs, travelled around, and exited them again. Jane stared at Maura. Fire burned in the pit of her stomach. She needed to vent and Maura was putting blocks in front of her. Her attention was obviously split between working and their conversation. She stood up and walked across the room.

"This is serious," Jane said.

"I know, I need to." Jane pressed her hand down against the lid of the laptop and it closed suddenly. "I was in the middle of finishing a report."

"Your report can wait five minutes."

"A young boy died of septicaemia which caused acute respiratory distress syndrome and septic shock. His family need to be

informed."

"What are we going to do about my mother?"

"Did you hear what I said, or did you choose to ignore it?"

Jane rolled her eyes. "I chose to ignore it."

Maura sighed and stood up. She moved around her desk and perched on the edge. "I hear what you're saying. Until we make any firm progress on our current situation, I see no reason why we should alarm your mother to the fact that something is going on. Now please, get back to work so that I can close a particularly distressing case."

"I'm sorry," Jane said, turning tail and marching out of the office.

x

The elevator doors opened. Maura marched across the corridor, her heels clicking against the tiled floor. She turned to a couple of officers she could feel watching her from the side lines and sent them her best glare. Sometimes she hated visiting Jane's office, not least because of the number of men who deemed it appropriate to stare.

"This is for you," Maura said, placing the file on Jane's desk and retreating once more.

"Wait," Jane said. Maura glanced over at the two young men, sniggering behind their hands. Their juvenile games were anything but funny. She turned back to Jane, whose eyes had already followed her eye line. She folded her arms across her chest. "Grow up, you've never seen a woman's legs before?"

They stopped laughing and disappeared down the corridor.

"Thank you," Maura said. "I wonder if I would provoke the same response if I was wearing my scrubs."

"Sure you would," Jane said. "You're smoking and they know it."

Maura raised an eyebrow, her lips curved at one side. "Smoking?"

"You know you're beautiful."

"Is that a compliment on my appearance from Jane Rizzoli?"

"Don't read too much into it." She picked up the file and opened it. "Are we any closer to selecting a candidate?"

Maura glanced around at the detectives working at their desks. Frankie and Korsak were out, and their nearest neighbours were too involved in a discussion to overhear.

"I have sent communication to all candidates to seek further information."

"There's a match?" Jane asked, picking up the DNA results from the file. "Now we have something to go off."

"I thought you'd be pleased." Maura perched on the corner of her desk. "The DNA evidence found on fibres at the crime scene directly match DNA found on the murder weapon. Hopefully you can find out who the killer is."

"All we have to do now is match it with our â€" as yet undiscovered â€" prime suspect, and we might be able to get a conviction."

"Are you any closer to finding your prime suspect?"

"Nah." Jane replaced the document and closed the file. "Wouldn't it be funny if we chose the one person on our shortlist who has murdered someone?"

Maura stood up straight, her lips pressed tightly together. "I'm not sure what's funny about that, Jane."

"Well, no, not that type of funny." Jane paused. "Maybe we should do a bit of research. I wonder if they would give us a DNA sample?"

"What kind of research?" Maura asked. The questions she sent were relatively thorough, though she hadn't asked for Jane's approval. There may have been things she was missing. Despite spending each and every day in a police station, she hadn't even considered asking if they had any criminal convictions. "I would like them to go through full genetics testing before we decide."

"Not genetics," Jane said. "Finger printing, put them through the system, see if anything crops up."

Maura's eyebrows pulled together. "You want to use police resources to do a background check on our potential candidates?"

"I know you think it's wrong to do background checks for personal reasons," Jane said.

"Ordinarily, yes."

"Doctor Maura Isles," Jane said, in mock disbelief. "I do believe you're a little rule breaker."

"Please," Maura said. "I am not above using the resources at my disposal. I simply see no valid reason to use them on potential or current partners, and I draw the line on using them on family. Our situation is entirely different."

"Entirely different," Jane repeated, smirking.

"It is."

"If you say so."

"It is," Maura said. She wouldn't accept Jane's suggestion if she didn't deem it morally acceptable, and she didn't much appreciate Jane's derision.

Jane tapped her nose. "I won't tell anyone."

6. Chapter 6

****Author Notes****:** Thank you for all of the lovely comments, such a mixed bag of opinions on Silver and the current baby situation. I hope you'll all continue to read and comment (because it's so much fun reading about what you think). There will be twists and turns along the way, and I know I can't always guarantee Jane/Maura endings, but I do love them together as much as everyone else.**

* * *

><p>A droplet of sweat trickled down lightly tanned skin, glistening in the morning sunlight. Jane followed it down nicely toned abs until it disappeared into the waistband of Silver Heyes' running shorts. She lifted her gaze. Silver let her shirt drop back over her stomach, damp with sweat wiped from her neck.<p>

"I was born in Connecticut," she said, lifting a knee up to a small wall and retying her shoe.

Jane's eyes lacked focus. She stared into the deep purple of Silver's sports bra, peering out above her shirt. They agreed to a brief rest, then they would continue running. Jane's heart raced, failing to slow during their much needed break.

No.

"Did you grow up there?" she asked. She swallowed. Her mouth was dry. The light coating of sweat cooled her skin.

The sun shone down upon them, already too hot for an average May morning. Jane reached for her water bottle and squirted it into her mouth, swallowing mouthful after mouthful until she felt relief. She closed her mouth and lifted the bottle higher. She pressed down on the plastic edges once more, pouring water across her face.

Silver tilted her head to one side, her lip tucked under her upper teeth. "We moved to Massachusetts when I was seven. I came to Boston for school."

Can't look.

She stretched her leg out in front of her, staring down at the grass. Her hands pressed against her knee. "BCU?"

"Yeah."

"Did you know Maura?"

"No. I mostly took humanities classes. I recognise her name from the alumni register. It's entirely possible that our paths have crossed. When did she graduate?"

"No idea," Jane said. "She just turned forty."

"She was probably already in medical school when I started as an undergrad."

Twirling her hair up from her shoulders and tying it behind her head, Silver motioned to the path in front of them. "Shall we?"

Jane's eyes trailed down the side of her neck, following a stray strand of hair that had escaped the prison of her hair tie. Silver set off running. Jane placed one foot down on the concrete, then another, keeping her stride momentarily behind Silver.

It wasn't right.

She hummed a Christmas tune; anything to push the unwanted thoughts from her brain. Over and over and over again. _Dashing through the snow, in a one horse open sleigh, o'er the fields we go, laughing all the way._

She longed for an icy blast of rainfall to break up the already burning heat. Summer had barely started.

"You grew up in Boston?"

Jane kept up her pace, gaining a little to meet Silver's stride. "Born and raised."

"Have you every thought about leaving?"

"Nah." She focused ahead. Her eyes fixed on the end of the footpath a few hundred yards in the distance.

"I guess your whole family's here."

"Race ya to the sidewalk," Jane shouted. "Loser buys the coffee."

She didn't want to answer anymore questions. She didn't want to see Silver at her side, or in front of her. She couldn't handle the unwelcomed, and downright inappropriate, thoughts going through her mind. She sped onward, forcing her body to work hard to push out everything but the thumping of her pulse in her ear.

Approaching the end of the footpath, Silver gained on her. Her feet pounded the pavement quicker than Jane. She tried to focus on the end goal, until Silver's hand hit the trash can by the sidewalk sooner.

"You win," Jane said, slowing to a walk. She didn't hesitate to make sure that Silver was following. "I've gotta get to work."

"Don't you want that coffee?"

She barely turned. "Raincheck?"

"Wait, Jane." Silver placed a hand on her shoulder. Her damp fingers hit her skin. A shiver travelled down her spine. She twisted round, a little too close. "Is everything okay?"

"Tired," she said.

The fingers on her skin didn't move. Jane glanced up into Silver's blue-grey eyes. She froze, trapped in a comfortable stare. She

searched her mind for words that didn't form. The longer she stared, the harder it became to look away. Silver leaned in, her eyelids fluttered closed. Her breath tickled Jane's lips. She was so close she could almost taste her.

She closed her eyes and lowered her face. "I should go."

Opening her eyes again, disappointment flashed over Silver's face. Jane chided herself. It was not okay.

"If I come by the police department this week, can I get you a coffee?"

"I lost," Jane said. She nodded her head before she spoke again. Her body betrayed her. She silently cursed herself for building up Silver's hopes. A glint in her eyes shone brighter than she'd looked throughout their run. Jane had specifically chosen a neutral activity. She didn't anticipate just how lacking in neutrality it would be. Or how much it would physically affect her. She held a hand up and walking off down the sidewalk. "Later."

x

"We almost kissed," Jane said, marching into Maura's office.

Maura cleared her throat and held a hand out to a middle-aged man wearing Calvin Klein sat on the couch. "Jane, this is Doctor Harper from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Connecticut. He's here to discuss a case he's working on that bares striking similarities with one of our own."

She coughed to disguise the smirk spreading across her face as Jane waved her hand and marched right back out of the office again.

"Apologies, Doctor Harper," Maura said, seating herself opposite him. "Detective Rizzoli's personal life is neither important, nor appropriate, under the circumstances."

Finishing up her conversation, Maura saw Doctor Harper out of the building and returned to her office. She opened up her email account and clicked refresh. Her ears pricked up. A tapping sound came from her right. She turned to the door to the autopsy room. Jane peered at her over the edge of the doorframe, her finger tapped against the glass window again.

"Yes?" Maura asked, standing up to open the door.

"Is he gone?"

Maura raised her eyebrows. "This is why people knock when they enter an office—he's gone."

"Thank God for that," Jane said, entering the office and taking a seat on the other side of Maura's desk.

"Why were you in the autopsy room?"

"Where else could I go?"

"Back to your office."

"My office is full of people and I can't handle people right now," she said. "Did you hear what I said?"

"You almost kissed. I assume you mean you and Silver."

"Yes."

Maura took a seat beside her. "Did you want to?"

Jane narrowed her eyes. "We've been through this."

"I understand it must have been very nerve wracking for you," Maura said. "Sharing a first kiss with anybody can be awkward, but your first kiss with a woman."

Jane sighed. She covered her face with her hands, her elbow perched against her knee. "It's not the first time."

"Pardon?" Maura asked. "I didn't quite catch that."

"It's not my first rodeo."

"You and Silver went to the rodeo?"

Jane groaned. She sat upright. "No, Maura. It wouldn't have been the first time I've kissed a woman."

"You've kissed a woman before?" She paused. After the initial shock, her lips curved at the edges. "Tell me everything. Does this mean you're more open to a relationship with Silver? How was it?"

"This is why I didn't want to tell you," Jane said.

"Why?"

"Because I knew you'd make a big deal about it. It's not a big deal. I was young, I was stupid. It doesn't matter."

"It obviously has some semblance of importance given what has been happening with Silver."

"Nothing is happening with Silver."

Maura folded her arms across her chest and waited. Jane was flustered. Her cheeks had taken on a decidedly bright shade of pink. Her revelation was not something Maura felt able to just brush aside, despite Jane's desire for her to do just that. The longer she waited, the more anxious Jane became. Her foot tapped the floor. Maura checked the clock, forcing herself to wait just a little while longer.

"I had a girlfriend when I was twenty," Jane said, clasping her hands together on her lap.

Opening her mouth to speak, Maura closed it again. She neatly placed her hands together on her knee and crossed her legs. The only thing

Jane needed now was time. So she listened, and waited.

"Let's just say that Ma and Pop didn't approve."

"At all?" Maura leaned forward, and placed her hand over Jane's.

"Nah," she said, reclaiming her hand. She folded her arms tightly across her chest and slouched further in her seat. Her eyes were full of a vulnerability she rarely got to see. Maura leaned back. She knew enough about body language to know that Jane wasn't entirely comfortable.

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be." She shrugged.

"I pushed you, I made jokes about you and Silver. They were ill timed and inappropriate. I can only say that I am sorry."

Jane pushed her shoulder against Maura's. "Thanks, Maur."

A silence fell between them. Maura could sense a tension that hadn't been there before. She wondered what else Jane might be hiding from her.

"Tell me about Doctor Harper," Jane said. "He's cute."

Maura rolled her eyes. "He's at least fifty-five."

"So?"

"He's deputy chief medical examiner in Connecticut."

"That matters because?"

"He's deputy. I'm chief. It will never work."

"Does it really matter if he's below you in the ranks?" Jane asked. "You're a beautiful, smart, funny woman and he looks like he's a catch. Did you spot a wedding band?"

"I wasn't looking that hard."

Jane rolled her eyes. "I thought you were good at picking up people to have sex with."

"I don't want to pick him up to have sex with," Maura said.

"Hey, maybe he can be our baby daddy."

"No."

"But he's got amazing cheekbones."

"So has the man we've chosen. Besides, you said it yourself, you didn't want our child to have a father who has had sex with me."

"You should still ask him out on a date."

Maura shook her head. She didn't want to date anybody right now. Her priority was only to herself. Maintaining her healthy lifestyle, cutting down on her intake of wine, and exercising regularly. If they were going to attempt to become pregnant in the next month or two, she needed to be at peak physical fitness.

"Maybe after we've had the baby."

x

The smell penetrated every inch of the apartment. Jane snapped on a pair of gloves, her booties already covered her shoes. She turned back to the corridor and breathed in a long, deep breath. Even that knocked her sick. She marched into the apartment.

"Alan McGee, forty-seven," Korsak said, holding a handkerchief over his nose and mouth. "He's been here for some time."

Maura knelt down beside the bed. She pulled and tugged at the decomposing body. The bright lights the forensics team brought lit up the dark apartment. She winced, but maintained her composure. Jane's chest ached. She didn't know how Maura could do it. She couldn't hold her breath any longer. Finally, she let out a gasp and breathed in the worst of it. She gagged and coughed, covering her mouth to assist in pulling herself back together.

"You losing your stomach Rizzoli?" Korsak asked.

"I'm fine," she whispered. It didn't help that it was four in the morning and she'd not eaten or drunk anything but water since ten the night before.

Maura stood up and drew back her gloves. "There's massive decomposition of the organs. His face is severely bloated. He's already reached fluidity. I'd estimate, from the level of decomposition, that this man has been here for at least a couple of months."

"Any next of kin?" Jane asked, breathing into her hand.

Korsak checked back through his notes. "The apartment's registered in his name. Records show his wife and daughter died eight years ago. No other family. He's been registered disabled for the last seven years after he suffered a breakdown. The neighbours who called it in haven't heard from him much recently."

Jane rolled her eyes. "I wonder why."

"They work from home, so they rarely go out. They just got back from a vacation in Cancun, said they hadn't noticed a smell before."

"How do you not notice this?" Jane asked.

"Actually," Maura said. "Olfactory fatigue, or odor fatigue, as it's also known, is quite common. The longer you're exposed to an odor, the more likely it is that you will become desensitised to it."

"How?" Jane asked. "I smell Frankie's stinking shoes every time he

walks into the office."

"That's because your exposure to the odor is not consistent. On the occasion that you're sat together for several hours, eventually you would forget about it. This man's neighbours may have picked up on the odor early on, but it would have been lacking in potency. The stronger it became, the stronger their desensitisation. Taking a vacation gave them a long enough space between exposure that when they returned their nose had forgotten."

"What's your verdict, Doctor Google?"

Maura tossed her gloves into a biohazard sack. "I have a degree of certainty that this man died of natural causes. I'll take him back to the lab to do a full autopsy first thing."

"We're done?" Jane asked.

"We're done."

Jane turned tail and marched out of the apartment, tugging off her gloves and booties before she reached the door. She placed them into another biohazard sack and continued on down the corridor until she reached the exit. She stood on the sidewalk, breathing in slowly, filling her lungs with uncontaminated air. The moon shone high in the sky. There was barely a breeze in the air, the heat had dissipated somewhat.

x

"Your mother offered to cook dinner tonight," Maura said, carrying her bag out of the apartment building. "Would you like to join us?"

Jane rolled her eyes and set off walking. "Not really."

"Is this because of Silver?" Maura fell into step beside her. She hated asking questions, given how sensitive Jane was about the matter, but she also wanted to show an interest. When Jane was with Casey, they talked a lot.

Jane span around, her voice hushed. "No, it's not because of Silver."

The street was empty, excepting the officer guarding the apartment building. Given how warm it had been over the last few days, Maura enjoyed the stroll.

"Sometimes I just don't wanna spend time with my mother," Jane said.

"Have you spoken to her about what happened when you were in your twenties?"

"No."

"Would you consider it?"

Jane's shoulders dropped. "I don't want to talk about it, Maura. With her, with you, with anybody. What I do want to talk about is our

living arrangements when the baby comes."

"What do you mean?"

"Are we gonna carry on living in separate houses?"

Maura pulled out her keys out of her bag. "Would you like to live in the same house?"

"I think it'd be nice for us both to be able to spend as much time with our kid as possible," she said. "If we're gonna bring a kid up together, we should do it together."

"Then let's do it together," Maura said.

"How soon should we ask Ma to find her own place?"

Maura stopped walking. A crease formed between her eyebrows. She enjoyed Angela's company. Inviting her to stay had been an impromptu decision a few years ago, but it had been one of the best decisions she had ever made. Living with Angela gave her a ticket to the Rizzoli family, and she loved every one of them like they were her own.

"When you said you want us to live together, you mean you want us to live together without your mother?"

"Exactly."

She didn't know how she felt about that. On the one hand, living with Jane, and Angela's future grandchild, she would still be involved in her pseudo-family. On the other, she would dearly miss Angela's company.

"You know, there are some advantages of having your mother continue to live in the guest house," Maura said.

Jane gritted her teeth. "Like her interfering with how we raise the kid."

"Jane."

"Don't Jane me," she said. "You didn't have to live with her for twenty-two years. I only got out because I met people at the academy who I could rent a place with."

"It's currently four in the morning. How do you propose we find someone to care for our child when we get called out to unexplained deaths at four in the morning?"

"Bring her with us?"

"Be serious, Jane."

"You're the Chief Medical Examiner," she said, stopping by the side of her car and taking her own keys from her jacket pocket. "Can't you make sure you don't have to work the same nights as me?"

"What about the cases where I'm requested?" Maura asked. "If it involves a person of importance, I cannot say no."

"We'll deal with those situations as and when they happen."

"I'd want to deal with them now," Maura said."

Jane rolled her eyes, her shoulders slouched. "At four in the morning?"

"You brought this up," Maura said. "Besides, I find my brain works best at four."

"Your place or mine?"

"Let's go to your place, then your mother won't disturb us when she comes in for her morning coffee."

x

They sat in silence for longer than Jane deemed necessary. Maura wanted to talk about how they would deal with their unsociable work hours, and yet hadn't said a word since they sat down. She cupped a mug of hot coffee between her hands, breathing in the hypnotic scent of her caffeine infused drink. Jane sunk down onto the couch.

"I think I loved her," Jane said, filling the silence with the first words to come to mind.

Maura turned and lifted a leg under her. "Who? Your ex-girlfriend?"

Jane nodded. She ran a hand through her hair and rested her elbow against the back of the couch. "I don't know. I never really got to find out. Everything happened so quickly."

"With your parents?"

"Anytime I felt anything like that afterwards, I pushed it down. I've been pushing it down for twenty years. I guess it didn't fit into the good Catholic lifestyle Ma and Pop saw for me."

"Angela's changed a lot, Jane," Maura said, running her hand up and down her shoulder. "I think she'd be more open to it now."

"It's too late."

"Do you have any feelings for Silver?"

Jane stared down at her coffee mug. She lifted it to her mouth, biding her time. She spoke into the coffee before she swallowed. "Yeah."

Tightening her grip around her arm, Jane felt comfort under Maura's touch. "Then maybe it's not too late."

End
file.